



hudson's
hundredth
1881-1981



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Joseph L. Hudson, Jr.
Chairman

Dear Friends:

It isn't often that a store can boast a legacy of one hundred years of service to several generations of customers. Our Centennial in 1981 is an accomplishment of which we are deeply proud.

Our continuing success over these ten decades has been measured by dedicated employees, faithful customers, dependable suppliers and a reputation for credibility.

I am sure that when my great uncle, Joseph Lowthian Hudson, opened his small Detroit store in 1881, he never dreamed that his innovative merchandising ideas and community philanthropy would endure into a second century and expand into nineteen "Hudson's" located throughout Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana.

All of us at The J.L. Hudson Company owe much to our founder's leadership, determination and foresight. His doctrines of integrity and civic involvement are as important to our organization today as they were in his era.

As we begin our second hundred years, we are excited about what the future holds for our dynamic company. Please join us in our celebration of this milestone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joseph L. Hudson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "H".

Joseph Lowthian Hudson,
founder



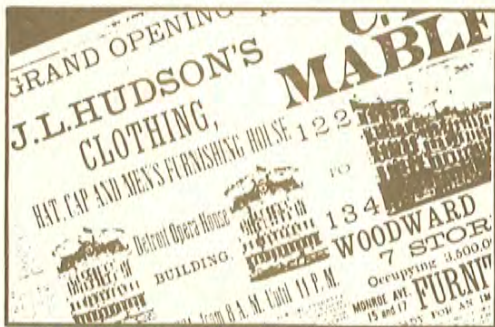
One hundred years. A mere ten decades. A fleeting moment in the vast scheme of things. A time to see the world change immeasurably. One hundred years ago, The J.L. Hudson Co. was conceived as but a dream for a young man with incredible foresight. Imagine what Joseph Lowthian Hudson must have perceived in Detroit in 1881.



Joseph L. Hudson opened his first store in the Detroit Opera House on the Campus Martius in 1881.

With 20 years of working experience already behind him, and a remarkable \$60,000 saved from his labors, Joseph L. Hudson opened a small men's and boys' haberdashery on April 2, 1881 in the old Detroit Opera House. He was 35 years old. Not one, but three band concerts entertained the opening day customers, and statements of

"Not a dollar's worth of old stock" were certainly a challenge to his neighboring competitors. In just ten years, he achieved such success that Hudson was able to build what he called the "Big Store", an eight-story full-line extravaganza on the corner of Gratiot and Farmer Street (part of the present site of our Downtown store).



Hudson's grand opening announcement from the Detroit Free Press, April 1, 1881.

J.L. Hudson built his first "Big Store" at the corner of Farmer and Gratiot in 1891.



This was the second tallest building in Detroit and considered to be "too far uptown" for the 200,000 Detroiters to reach. But come they did, in everything from private carriages to bicycles. To J.L. Hudson, it was the culmination of everything for which he had worked so hard. Quality merchandise, large assortments

and service were his standards. It is interesting to point out that he was one of the first merchants to indicate prices on his goods. Up to this time, dealer and customer would each name his price until a compromise could be reached. He established a comparison department and even had a horse-drawn delivery truck make the rounds of Detroit. While these seem like small points to us now, it was steps like these that made The J.L. Hudson Co. so popular and successful.



1885: View of Campus Martius, with The J.L. Hudson Co. in the Detroit Opera House

Unfortunately, the 1890's were troublesome years. Banks were closing everywhere and Hudson himself suffered a great personal loss trying to save them. The retailer even cut his own salary to that of a delivery wagon driver. During these difficult years, Hudson was forced to ask for an extension of credit from his suppliers. This was something he hadn't had to do since his father's retail business went into bankruptcy 20 years before in Ionia, Michigan. At that time young Joe Hudson made settlement of the debts at 60 cents on the dollar. But the young merchant was not satisfied simply to comply with the legal terms of the

settlement. When he was able, Hudson not only paid everyone the other 40 cents on the dollar, but also the compounded interest due them. This made business history, assuring Hudson an unlimited letter of credit for the rest of his life. Now in 1896, when his business needed credit, he was extended everything that was requested and more.



1891: Hudson's new 8 story Big Store as seen from the corner of Grand River and Farmer.

Although the company's sales did not grow during the 1890's, Hudson was not one to be discouraged. He continued to expand. As soon as conditions improved, an eight story addition just north of his original "Big Store" was built in 1907. Four years later in October of 1911, another ten story addition on the Woodward Avenue side of the block was erected.



In 1911, the original store was enlarged to include the first unit of the present Woodward Ave. building.

In July of 1912, on his first trip home to his birthplace in England, J.L. Hudson died. He left a remarkable business legacy behind, but was probably most remembered at the time for his personal generosity and civic mindedness. A self-demanding businessman, he gave thousands of dollars to charity. His response to the needy was as instant as it was generous. Of special importance, the merchant helped blaze the trail for what we know today as the United Foundation. He also contributed personal time and financial support to Harper Hospital and helped to build the Downtown YMCA.

WEBBER BROTHERS CARRY ON

Since J.L. Hudson never married, he looked to his sister, Mary Eleanor Webber, for prospective successors to his business. He started early grooming of her sons, Richard, twins Joseph and James, and Oscar to carry on the family tradition. At the time of Hudson's death, Richard, the oldest, had been working with his uncle as a full-time assistant for 14 years, beginning when he was 19 years old. In turn, each of the brothers was indoctrinated in their uncle's merchandising philosophy and given more and more responsibility. When, in 1912, they were suddenly faced with the full responsibility of running the business, they had, among them, performed every job in the store. The heirs had confidence, competence and energy to build for the future. Detroit was now a rapidly growing city. Two fifths of the population looked to the automotive industry for jobs. The

assembly lines of Detroit were producing engines, machine tools, car bodies and wheels in great abundance. Skyscrapers dotted the downtown scene. The economic climate for progress appeared favorable. When in 1914, Henry Ford announced his \$5 a day minimum wage policy, the Webbers realized Detroit would become a dynamic, industrial hub, not the tranquil city their uncle had known.



Mr. Hudson's four nephews, the Webber brothers, took over the company at the time of his death in 1912. Here, a rare photo commemorating their combined service to the company of 205 years taken in the 1950's. Left to right, Oscar, Richard, Joseph and James.

The brothers responded by putting all their energies into creating a strong foundation for the emerging retail giant. Oscar, the youngest of the brothers, came up with the idea of a basement store... "a store within a store", which would actually become the upstairs store's biggest competitor. Its first year's sales in 1914 reached almost a million dollars.



Hudson's fleet of delivery trucks grew from its first horse-drawn wagon to this handsome group in the early 20's.

The Webbers kept expanding the building and didn't stop until 1928 when Hudson's "Big Store" had become the Greater Hudson Store. It covered almost an entire city block. When the Depression of the 30's hit Detroit and the sales volume dropped to less than half its 1929 peak, the brothers wondered if they hadn't overbuilt.



1927: Hudson's made a big step in buying the Newcomb-Endicott Co. on the corner. Later this building was demolished and replaced by a 16-story addition with a tower reaching 24 stories.

While the Depression affected every business in Detroit, The J.L. Hudson Co. persevered, utilizing this period for the development of new ideas and concepts which would serve the store well in the better times ahead.

In the tradition of the founder, the company had already taken some novel steps in forming its ties with the community. On Armistice Day in 1923, the J.L. Hudson Co. saluted the veterans of Detroit by unfurling the world's largest flag. An incredible 230 feet long and weighing 900 pounds, it was the first of two huge flags to grace the store annually until its retirement to the Smithsonian Institute in 1976.

Hudson's big flag was first unfurled on Armistice Day, 1923. It was 230 ft. long and weighed 900 lbs.



The J.L. Hudson Co. initiated the annual Thanksgiving Day parade in 1925, which brought Santa Claus through the streets of Downtown Detroit. The first parade floats were horse-drawn milk wagons covered with papier mache, but none the less, enthralling to the children who came to watch.



The first Santa Claus parade took place on Thanksgiving Day, 1925. The floats were horse-drawn milk wagons.

When World War II was over, and another 12 story addition completed the block-area structure at the corner of Gratiot and Woodward, the massive edifice boasted over 40 acres of floor space and employed 12,000 people.



1946: a final 12 story addition was made to the corner of Woodward and Gratiot, making Hudson's a full block square.

It became evident however, in the early 1950's with the ever increasing population shift to the suburbs that the company would need to keep on growing. This was a decision that would not only change the profile of the surrounding Detroit area, but the way of living and shopping all across America.

Convinced that good competition was healthy for business, the Webbers set about to plan an entire community of neighboring stores. Thus, Northland Center was born in 1954, the largest regional shopping center in the country. It set the standard for shopping center development in the United States. Three years later, Eastland Center was opened. The Webbers had the foresight to take a small, prospering business in 1912 and expand it until it was so large, not even the founder, J.L. Hudson would have recognized it.



When Northland Shopping Center opened in 1954, it was the largest regional shopping complex in the country.

Upon the premature death of their only immediate heir, James B. Webber, Jr., the Webbers looked to their uncle's namesake, Joseph L. Hudson, Jr. for their successor.

Joseph L. Hudson, Jr., had also grown up in this retailing family. His grandfather, William Hudson (J.L. Hudson's younger brother) had taken over the management of Hudson's first out-of-town stores in St. Paul and Buffalo. Other stores had been opened in St. Louis, Cleveland and Toledo. The only store that prospered was the Buffalo operation, which later was headed by William's son, J.L. Hudson, II, until it was sold in the 1930's.

Joseph L. Hudson
Jr. was named
president of
Hudson's in 1961, at
the age of only 29.



Young Hudson came to Detroit as a summer-time trainee starting first on the receiving dock at Hudson's in 1950. Eleven years later in 1961, and at the age of only 29, he succeeded Oscar Webber as President of the J.L. Hudson Company. Thus began another era of growth for this company. More stores were added to the rapidly growing chain. Pontiac Mall in 1962, Westland in 1965 and Oakland Mall in 1968.



Hudson's has celebrated the 4th of July with a big bang every year since 1959

Then in 1969, J.L. Hudson, Jr., took a significant step toward building for the future by merging the store with the Dayton Corporation, to form a nationwide retailing organization. Hudson's accelerated its expansion. In 1970 came Southland. Then Hudson's moved outside the metropolitan Detroit area, first to Flint in 1970, then, in 1971 to Toledo, Ohio. Next Ann Arbor, then Grand Rapids, Fairlane, Saginaw and Twelve Oaks. In 1978 came Lakeside, followed

by Lansing in 1979, South Bend, Indiana, and finally, Kalamazoo in 1980. In this, Hudson's 100th year, the company's 19th store will open in Fort Wayne, Indiana.



Everyone knows the real Santa Claus resides at Hudson's from Thanksgiving until Christmas.

This is but a capsule of the growth of one company. It is also meant as a tribute to the people who have made it possible, the employees, customers and suppliers who have together enabled the J.L. Hudson Company to become an integral part of the Dayton-Hudson Corporation, the 7th largest non-food retailer in the country.

No matter how the world has changed in the past 100 years, we still draw from our founder's adherence to integrity and high standards of credibility. Our company continues to uphold his civic interest by pledging 5% of our pre-tax profit each year to the cultural and community needs of the markets we serve.



The "Big Store" as it looks today.

All of us at Hudson's eagerly look forward to our second hundred years. May they be as grand as the first.



Designed and written by
Hudson's Advertising Department
in recognition of our Centennial
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